

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR MEX

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF DRUG ERADICATION PROGRAM IN MEXICO

1. SUMMARY: ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE INFORMED EMBASSY THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH PRESENT RESOURCES FOR GOM TO ERADICATE BOTH POPPY AND MARIJUANA. GOM HAS THEREFORE RELUCTANTLY DECIDED TO CEASE ALMOST ENTIRELY THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST MARIJUANA AND TO CONCENTRATE ON POPPY AND TO PREPARE AN ANALYSIS OF WHAT RESOURCES (BOTH GOM AND USG) WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONDUCT YEAR-AROUND EFFORT AGAINST BOTH POPPY AND MARIJUANA. GOM COMMITTED ITSELF TO DESTROY ALL POPPIES LOCATED BY DECEMBER ONE, THE DATE NEW ADMINISTRATION TAKES OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

2. AT REQUEST OF ALEJANDRO GERTZ, EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, EMBASSY OFFICERS CAESAR P. BERNAL (NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE UNIT), JACQUES I. KIERE (DEA), AND JOSEPH D. MCLAUGHLIN (SPECIAL ASSISTANT) WENT TO GERTZ' OFFICE EVENING OCTOBER FIVE FOR "URGENT MEETING" ON ERADICATION CAMPAIGN. WITH GERTZ DURING MEETING WERE ALEJANDRO HENESTROSA (CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE), RICARDO DE LOS RIOS (DIRECTOR MFJP ACADEMY) AND PEDRO DIAZ LAREDO (CHIEF COMMANDANTE).

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3. GERTZ BEGAN BY READING ALOUD A MEMO HE SENT TO ATTORNEY GENERAL OJEDA PAULLADA THAT MORNING ON MEXICAN GOVERNMENT (GOM) ERADICATION EFFORT. MEMO REVIEWED SUCCESS OF LAST ERADICATION CAMPAIGN, SUMMARIZED GOM EFFORTS SINCE APRIL 1976, AND HIGHLIGHTED PROBLEMS OF FUTURE CAMPAIGNS BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS THAT GOM MUST ATTACK BOTH POPPY AND MARIJUANA. AMONG MAJOR PROBLEMS NOTED: (1) CONTRARY TO ALL PREVIOUS ASSUMPTIONS, POPPIES CAN GROW IN MEXICO THROUGHOUT ENTIRE YEAR; (2) BASED ON POPPY AND MARIJUANA DESTRUCTION SINCE APRIL, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF FIELDS OR CROPS ANTICIPATED IN NEXT FOUR MONTHS APPEARS TO BE 40,000; (3) BOTH POPPY AND MARIJUANA CULTIVATION APPEAR TO BE PREVALENT IN MANY MORE AREAS THAN PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED; (4) COM MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS FAR LESS VALUABLE THAN PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED AS MILITARY PROVIDES ONLY MANPOWER, LEAVING LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE; (5) GOM COMMITMENT HAS BEEN FAR SMALLER, IN TERMS OF MONEY AND MANPOWER, THAN NECESSARY TO GUARANTEE COMPLETE ERADICATION OF BOTH POPPY AND MARIJUANA.

4. STATING HIS OWN OPINION, GERTZ SAID THAT HE HAD IN LAST TEN DAYS COME TO REALIZE COMPLEXITIES OF PROGRAM AND WANTED TO ASSURE THAT THE USG, BOTH HERE AND IN WASHINGTON, REALIZES THE MAGNITUDE OF EFFORT EXPENDED IN CAMPAIGN TO DATE AND IS AWARE THAT THIS LEVEL OF EFFORT IS HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE ON A SUSTAINED BASIS. THE PROGRAM, HE ADDED, WILL REQUIRE BOTH GOM AND USG RESOLVE TO MEET RESOURCES REQUIREMENTS FOR A LONG-TERM EFFORT AGAINST MARIJUANA AND POPPY.

5. ASKED HOW THE ATTORNEY GENERAL RESPONDED, GERTZ SAID HE WAS TOLD TO "HANDLE PROBLEM AS YOU SEE FIT." GERTZ THEREFORE DECIDED TO GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO POPPY DESTRUCTION BECAUSE OF THE GREATER HUMAN DAMAGE CAUSED BY HEROIN, DESPITE THE FACT THAT MEXICO'S MAJOR PROBLEM IS MARIJUANA ABUSE. HIS STRATEGY CONSISTS OF A MASSIVE SPRAY CAMPAIGN THROUGH CONCENTRATION OF RESOURCES IN THE THREE PRIORITY POPPY ZONES. HE CLAIMED TO BE UNEASY WITH THIS DECISION AS IT SHORT-CHANGES MEXICAN SOCIETY, BUT HE STATED THAT HE HAD NONETHELESS ISSUED THE NECESSARY ORDERS. HE HAS ALSO DIRECTED ALL HIS ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS TO PREPARE A STATEMENT, WITHIN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE NEXT EIGHT DAYS, OF THEIR MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO CONDUCT SIMULTANEOUS POPPY AND MARIJUANA ERADICATION CAMPAIGNS ON A YEAR-AROUND BASIS.

6. IN GENERAL DISCUSSION, GERTZ AND HIS STAFF NOTED THAT MEXICO HAS ONLY 200 FEDERAL AGENTS WORKING FULLTIME ON NARCOTICS, WHEN 2,000 ARE PROBABLY NECESSARY IF ALL TRAF- FICKING ROUTES ARE TO BE COVERED ADEQUATELY. THEY NOTED THAT

GOM BUDGET FOR CAMPAIGN HAS NOT INCREASED DESPITE GREATLY INCREASED COST OF HERBICIDES FOLLOWING PESO DEVALUATION. GERTZ ADDED THAT USG RESPONSE WAS SOMETIMES SLOW AND INADEQUATE, CITING AS AN EXAMPLE OUR OFFER TO PROVIDE TIME-SHARING RATHER THAN DEDICATED COMPUTER FACILITY. BRUNT OF HIS COMPLAINT WAS, HOWEVER, AGAINST GOM AND HE ADMITTED THAT GOM WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ABSORB INCREASED EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS HELICOPTERS, AS IT DID NOT HAVE THE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT PERSONNAL TO EMPLOY THEM FULLY.

7. ASKED IF HIS PREPARATION OF A TWELVE-MONTH PLAN COULD BE READ AS AN INDICATION OF CONTINUITY IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE AFTER THE DECEMBER ONE CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATION, GERTZ RESPONDED WITH AN EMPHATIC NEGATIVE. ON THE CONTRARY, HE SAID, HE AND HIS ENTIRE TEAM (HE SPECIFICALLY INCLUDED THOSE AT THE MEETING PLUS SALVADOR MARISCAL FLORES, THE CHIEF OF AVIATION) EXPECTED TO DEPART. WHILE HE CLAIMED TO HAVE NO IDEA OF WHO WOULD SUCCEED THEM, HE FEELS IT HIS DUTY TO PREPARE A STATEMENT OF NARCOTICS PROGRAM NEEDS FOR THE PRESENT ATTORNEY GENERAL, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT PROVIDE IT TO HIS SUCCESSOR.

8. EMBASSY OFFICERS PRAISED GERTZ' DECISION TO DEVELOP AN OVERALL PLAN AND CATALOG OF RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS, NOTING THAT BOTH GOM AND USG HAD INITIALLY RESPONDED TO AN OPERATIONAL CRISIS LAST YEAR WHEN POPPIES WERE DISCOVERED IN ABUNDANCE EARLIER THAN EXPECTED. THEY ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR GERTZ' DECISION TO CONCENTRATE EFFORTS AGAINST POPPY CULTIVATION (AT THIS POINT KIERE BRIEFED GERTZ ON REMARKS MADE AT RECENT DEA REGIONAL DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE CONCERNING CONGRESSIONAL EXPECTATION OF FALL IN PRICE-PURITY INDEX DURING NEXT SIX MONTHS). GERTZ THEN NOTED THAT HIS TEAM PLANS TO DESTROY EVERY POPPY FIELD IDENTIFIED

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BY DECEMBER ONE, LEAVING A CLEAN SLATE FOR THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION.

9. COMMENT: GERTZ PROMISED TO PROVIDE EMBASSY RESULTS OF HIS ANALYSIS, WHICH WE WILL FORWARD PROMPTLY TO WASHINGTON AGENCIES. MISSION WILL COMMENT ON GERTZ' PRESENTATION AT THAT TIME. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, WE WISH TO NOTE THAT GOM HAS SUFFICIENT EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES TO CONDUCT EFFECTIVE POPPY ERADICATION CAMPAIGN, GRANTED GERTZ' STATEMENT THAT POPPY PROGRAM WILL HAVE PRIORITY. INDEED THE COMMENTS OF THE THREE DEA ZONE COORDINATORS AT A PROGRAM REVIEW ON OCTOBER FOUR CONFIRMS THAT ERADICATION PROGRAM IS WORKING BETTER THAN EVER. AS ALL OF GERTZ' NEGATIVE REMARKS WERE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT BOTH POPPY AND MARIJUANA REQUIRE ERADICATION, WE ANTICIPATE NO PROBLEM FOR POPPY PROGRAM FOR

AS LONG AS THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION CAN MAKE A COMMITMENT.

10. AS TO GERTZ' REMARK ON OUR COMPUTER RESPONSE, MCLAUGHLIN NOTED THAT TIME-SHARING OPTION NOT INTENDED TO FOREVER PRECLUDE PROVISION OF DEDICATED FACILITY, BUT THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES WISHED TO PROVIDE FASTEST POSSIBLE MEANS FOR GOM TO COMPUTERIZE ITS NARCOTICS PROGRAM. GERTZ WAS TOLD THAT EMBASSY WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO ARRANGE FOR TDY VISIT OF DEA COMPUTER SPECIALISTS WHO DEVELOPED COMPUTER FACILITY AT EL PASO INTELLIGENCE CENTER, WITH WHICH GERTZ IS FAMILIAR. MOLLI-FIED, GERTZ ASKED IF SUCH SPECIALISTS COULD ARRIVE IN VERY NEAR FUTURE. (DEA HERE IS SEEKING TO DETERMINE HOW SOON THESE SPECIALISTS COULD ARRIVE.)
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